UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly

Distr.
LIMITED

A/C.2/50/L.55
4 December 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fiftieth session
SECOND COMMITTEE
Agenda items 96 (a) and 116

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997

Special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21

Programme budget implications of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.2/50/L.23

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

1. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 1, 3, 10 and 11 of the draft resolution the General Assembly would:

"Decide to convene the special session envisaged in its resolution 47/190 for a duration of one week during the month of June 1997 at the highest possible level of participation" (para. 1);

"Invite the Commission on Sustainable Development to convene its Ad Hoc Inter-Sessional Working Group meeting, in February 1997, as an open-ended meeting, so as to assist the Commission on Sustainable Development in undertaking the review for the special session" (para. 3);

"Decide to establish a voluntary fund to assist developing countries, in particular the least developed among them, in participating fully and effectively in the special session and its preparatory process, and invite Governments to contribute to the fund" (para. 10);

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"Request the Secretary-General to prepare, for the consideration of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fifth session, a comprehensive report containing an overall assessment of the progress achieved since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in the implementation of Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and related conference outcomes, as well as recommendations for future actions and priorities, including those concerning institutional matters, in particular the role of the Commission, and request that the report include:

(a) Concise reports containing an assessment of the progress achieved in specific sectoral and cross-sectoral areas;

(b) Country profiles providing a concise presentation of progress made and constraints encountered in implementing Agenda 21 at the national level, compiled on the basis of national information received and in close cooperation with the Governments concerned" (para. 11).

I. DESCRIPTION OF ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES RESULTING FROM THE DRAFT RESOLUTION

2. The substantive activities proposed in the draft resolution fall under programme 46 (Sustainable development) of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, as revised, and are partly covered under section 7A (Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

3. With regard to operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, the holding of the special session would require that the costs of travel but not the subsistence of one representative from the least developed countries attending the special session be met from the regular budget in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 41/213. These costs are estimated at $119,200. In this connection, it is understood that the voluntary fund referred to in operative paragraph 10 of the draft resolution could be used for payment of a daily subsistence allowance to the aforementioned representative from each least developed country attending the special session, in line with the practice applied under the terms of Assembly resolution 45/248 A, section XII, with respect to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Subject to the trust fund's having sufficient resources, travel and subsistence expenses would also be paid to one representative each of other developing countries at their request.

4. A provision of $6,200 would be required for official functions of the President of the General Assembly during the special session.

5. In accordance with established practice, the requirements estimated in paragraphs 3 and 4 above ($125,400) would be budgeted under section 1 (Overall policy-making, direction and coordination) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

6. The Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat would provide information coverage of the special session which would include production of an information kit highlighting the progress achieved in implementation of Agenda 21 1/ and the issues to be discussed at the special session, radio programmes covering the issues under review, public information outreach and other promotional activities. These activities would be implemented from within the resources of the Department of Public Information envisaged under section 25 (Public information) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

7. With regard to operative paragraph 11 of the draft resolution, it should be noted that the comprehensive report containing an overall assessment of the progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21 has initially been programmed under the programme entitled "Sustainable development" of section 7A of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 for submission to the special session without the country profiles component. It has now been estimated that a two-page country profile would need to be prepared for each country in order to meet this new requirement. The cost of these activities would be absorbed from the resources proposed for the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development for 1996-1997. In addition, a specialized report on extrapolation of trends involving interlinkages between sectoral and cross-sectoral issues of sustainability would be prepared for submission to the special session. No adequate expertise within the Secretariat and the specialized agencies is available for preparation of that report. It is estimated that 12 work-months of consultancy services totalling $72,000 would be required for this purpose.

8. The activities referred to in operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution in relation to the convening of the Ad Hoc Inter-Sessional Working Group of the Commission on Sustainable Development would be accommodated from within the level of resources proposed for policy-making organs under section 7A (Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

9. The conference-servicing requirements for the special session have been estimated as amounting to $825,600, on a full-cost basis. These requirements will be dealt with within the overall provision for the conference-servicing of United Nations meetings and conferences reserved within the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. The actual conference-servicing costs of the session will be reported to the General Assembly within the context of the budget performance report for the biennium 1996-1997.

II. PROPOSALS FOR ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES TO BE INCLUDED WITHIN THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997

10. The following additional activities will have to be programmed within the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997:

Section 7A. Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development

2. Sustainable development

Programme A.
Sustainable development

Activities

2. Parliamentary services

(a) Parliamentary documentation

(ii) Specialized report on extrapolation of trends involving interlinkage between sectoral and cross-sectoral issues of sustainability; country profiles on progress made and constraints encountered in implementing Agenda 21 at the national level.

11. The resource requirements estimated in paragraphs 4-7 above would amount to $197,400. They represent additional requirements not provided for in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

12. It will be recalled that, under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and 42/211 of 21 December 1987, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. Furthermore, each statement of programme budget implications and each proposal for revised estimates should contain alternatives to the financing from the contingency fund of the proposed new activities.

13. With regard to the additional requirements of $197,400, it was not possible to identify the activities within the above programmes that could be terminated, deferred, curtailed or modified during the biennium to finance the costs of the activities under the draft resolution. In the event that resources from the contingency fund should not be available to finance the additional activities proposed in paragraph 10 above, the Secretary-General would make alternative proposals to the General Assembly in accordance with the procedure established in its resolution 42/211 of 21 December 1987.

III. SUMMARY

14. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.23, the additional activities listed in paragraph 10 above would be programmed under section 7A (Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

15. Subject to the guidelines for use and operation of the contingency fund, an additional appropriation in the amount of $197,400 for 1996-1997 would be required, broken down as follows:

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Section 1	125 400
Section 7A	72 000
Total	197 400

Notes

1/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.